

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKO #3172/01 3220807
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 170807Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8873
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6441
RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE 0094
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0014
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2254
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2619
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 6330
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2421
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2583
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 003172

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF AND EAP/J

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/16/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [EAID](#) [KPKO](#) [SO](#) [ZI](#) [SU](#) [CH](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: AF ASSISTANT SECRETARY JENDAYI E. FRAZER MEETS
WITH JAPANESE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON AFRICA

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Japan will continue to deepen its economic and political engagement with Africa, senior Japanese officials told Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Jendayi E. Frazer October 17. MOFA officials expressed skepticism about the sustainability of Chinese development programs in Africa and called for greater international coordination with China on African development. MOFA remains concerned about piracy off the coast of Somalia, and it will soon dispatch Self Defense Force personnel to assist the U.N. Mission in Sudan. And Japan is committed to increasing its official development assistance to Africa. END SUMMARY.

JAPANESE SUPPORT FOR AFRICA IS STRONG

12. (C) Despite Africa's geographical distance and weak historical ties with Japan, public support for increased engagement with Africa is strong, MOFA Director General for Sub-Saharan African Affairs Yoshitaka Akimoto told Assistant Secretary Frazer October 17. The Japanese public perceive that Africa faces many pressing problems which must be addressed, and as a leading member of the international community, Japan must contribute. In addition, many private companies are becoming more interested in Africa due to its growing markets and its oil, rare metals, and other natural resources. Finally, there is a strong sense in Japan that China is very active in Africa, a fact which acts to increase Japanese interest. Akimoto said that in spite of the fact that Japan's official development assistant (ODA) budget is shrinking, he has heard of no one in the opposition parties calling for less assistance to Africa or criticizing the government's recent commitments to significantly increase assistance.

13. (C) However, despite public support for increased engagement in Africa, MOFA has a difficult time convincing Ministry of Defense officials that Japan needs to do more, said Akimoto. It took MOFA over six months of hard work to convince MOD to approve the dispatch of two officers to assist U.N. forces in Sudan, for example. Akimoto remains hopeful that parliamentary support for Africa will be strong, noting that Japan's "strongest and most active" parliamentary friendship association is the one that deals with Africa. It

is led by former Prime Minister Mori and regularly publishes briefing papers in support of stronger ties with Africa. He said that it is not yet clear whether the fact that current Prime Minister Aso spent two years in Africa as a youth will translate to a strong personal interest in Africa policy.

THE TICAD PROCESS

14. (C) Japan's support for Africa is also demonstrated by the Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD) process which was "invented" by Japan fifteen years ago, said Akimoto. Since then, it has been "copied" by China, India, and others who want to make it seem they are deeply engaged with Africa. Japan is very proud of the recent TICAD IV meeting held last May in Yokohama, which attracted a record number of heads of state. Even so, said Akimoto, Japan wants to make TICAD even more comprehensive and unique. Unlike other multinational forums on Africa, TICAD is co-hosted by the UNDP, the World Bank, and UN Office of the Special Advisor for Africa. Japan would also like to see an African co-host in order to give the Africans more of an "ownership stake" in the process. Akimoto said he will visit Ethiopia the week of October 20 and plans to invite his counterparts there to accept a co-host role.

15. (C) Akimoto did admit that, to some extent, TICAD is a bit of a "political show" with many leaders simply reading the same statements they present at all international conferences on Africa. However, some important messages were conveyed, he noted. Foremost among them is the fact that the donor

community needs to pay more attention to the private sector. Citing Japan's positive experiences in Southeast Asia, Akimoto said that yen loans made to manufacturing industries result in exports which lead to sustainable economic growth. This is in contrast to simply building schools, hospitals and roads which, while designed to alleviate poverty do not lead to sustainable growth. Japan's approach, he said, is therefore based on the notion of "poverty reduction through economic growth."

16. (C) Studies made prior to TICAD IV indicate that Japanese companies believe there are three main obstacles to doing business in Africa:

-- lack of infrastructure: it does no good to extract minerals or to manufacture products if there are no roads or ports to move them on or through;

-- lack of skilled labor: because Africa lacks a skilled workforce, labor costs are too high; and

-- poor governance: the levels of corruption and the lack of rule of law make doing business very difficult.

While Japan plans to continue to address these problems with ODA, there is a realization that at the same time steps need to be taken to increase economic sustainability.

CONCERN OVER THE ROLE OF CHINA

17. (C) DG Akimoto explained that the growing Chinese presence in Africa is of great interest to Japan and acts as a motivator, as many Japanese have come to see China, itself formerly the largest recipient of Japanese aid, as a competitor on the continent. Akimoto said Japan is opening several new embassies, but with 28 embassies compared to China's 47, the perception among some Japanese is that Japan must "catch up". Tokyo senses China's leadership is becoming aware that its actions in Africa are damaging China's reputation abroad, Akimoto said, but China's unconditional development assistance endangers democracy promotion in Africa, lacks transparency, fails to consider environmental and social impacts, and does not conform to internationally

established aid practices; all of which are harming China's reputation. Akimoto stressed the importance of looking at opportunities to cooperate and compliment Chinese assistance while urging it to be a more constructive regional partner.

¶8. (C) A/S Frazer told Akimoto that while China still publicly adheres to its principle of non-interference, it is beginning to see the limits of this policy as it develops longer-term strategic alliances in such countries as Sudan, where it has not been as active as it could be in attempting to shield President Bashir from U.N. sanctions and an International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment. China needs to be encouraged to promote political stability and good governance in countries such as Angola and Zimbabwe. Akimoto said Japan, like China, is providing assistance for infrastructure construction to expand the African market, however China must abide by international norms in funding development projects in Africa.

SUDAN

¶9. (C) On Sudan, Akimoto said Japan's position on an ICC indictment has been unclear, explaining that while Japan respects the independence of the ICC, it is also concerned that an indictment might jeopardize the peace process. Frazer explained the USG might be more flexible about an Article 16 deferral if there is substantial progress towards peace, but told Akimoto it would not be a quid-pro-quo, and progress in achieving peace in Darfur and in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement would need to be substantial and soon.

SOMALIA

¶10. (C) On Somalia, Akimoto said Japan is concerned about the "alarming" rise in piracy and noted two cases in the past year where international forces rescued Japanese registered ships. Frazer said the piracy problem stems from instability within Somalia, and it is important to build the capacity of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) police. Noting the USG contribution of \$1.7 million to the High Level Committee in support of the Djibouti Peace Agreement, Frazer said it would be useful if Japan could find a way to contribute to this effort. Akimoto explained the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (MSDF) has no legal basis to deploy to counter piracy off the coast of Somalia; however, Japan has provided assistance to the TFG through the UNDP and the International Organization for Migration as well as to neighboring countries' coast guards.

ZIMBABWE

¶11. (C) Akimoto was interested in learning about the views of the United States on the current situation in Zimbabwe. A/S Frazer explained that the negotiation process was not complete and that the power-sharing agreement is not a good deal for the opposition. Nevertheless, we want the parties to make it work somehow. The agreement is weak because Mugabe retains power over all the key ministries and because there is no timeline set for the continued transition to democracy. We will therefore maintain the sanctions we have in place and, if the opposition doesn't get control of the ministries it should have, we'll write off the agreement. In addition, we're holding additional sanctions in reserve, and we may move forward with them if Mugabe fails to do what is right. The European Union just came out with a very strong statement on this, said A/S Frazer, and she hoped the Japanese will also keep the pressure on Mugabe.

PEACE-KEEPING

¶12. (C) In response to A/S Frazer's comment that the USG supports a U.N. peace-keeping force with a protection mandate in Somalia, Akimoto said Japan will make a greater contribution to international peace-building following Prime Minister Fukuda's commitment to making Japan a "peace-fostering nation". He said the first step is the dispatch of two SDF personnel to Sudan, the first deployment to Africa in fourteen years. He said, while the Self Defense Force had become reluctant to deploy to Africa following the Rwanda experience in the 1990's, Japanese public opinion has become more sensitive to the need for change in Africa which eased approval for this deployment.

OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

¶13. (C) In a separate meeting with A/S Frazer, MOFA Director General for International Cooperation Masato Kitera echoed Akimoto's theme of expanding engagement with Africa, referencing former Prime Minister Fukuda's commitment at the April TICAD IV Conference to double ODA to Africa in five years. Kitera said the GOJ assistance model is intended to enable the private sector to double its investment, a reference to Japanese ODA to Thailand in the 1990's, which, as explained earlier by Akimoto, saw infrastructure development followed by substantial private sector investment. Kitera also said the recent reorganization of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) should make Japanese aid more efficient (and effective) by having one organization responsible for country assistance from project formulation to execution.

¶14. (C) Kitera added Japan will work with African countries to protect investments through measures such as negotiation of double taxation agreements. On China, Kitera said African countries must judge the merits of Chinese assistance. He dismissed the notion, frequent in the media, that China and Japan are rivals in Africa, saying Japan is pursuing a more sustainable, long-term relationship with the region, including the provision of technical experts and overseas cooperation volunteers to develop capacity. In this regard, Kitera called for close U.S.-Japan cooperation on development in the region.

¶15. (C) Kitera jokingly pointed out that prior to assuming his current position last August he had spent six months as Akimoto's predecessor as DG for Sub-Saharan African Affairs. In that position he had been responsible for planning TICAD IV and was quite pleased with himself at the successful conclusion of the conference. His contentment was short-lived, however, as he learned he had been named DG for International Cooperation, and now had to be responsible for executing all the commitments he had made at TICAD.

BIO INFORMATION

¶16. (C) DG Akimoto is a Russia specialist, having spent over half his career, including three tours in Moscow, dealing with Russian and Soviet affairs. He was born on January 1, 1953 and earned a law degree from Tokyo University in 1977. Akimoto entered the Foreign Service that same year. He took up his current position in August 2008 and has had no prior Africa experience or travel. Prior high level postings include Counselor at the Japanese Embassy in London (1992-94), Counselor in Moscow (1994-97), Director of the Eastern Europe Division (1997-99), Director of the Grant Aid Division (1999-2001), Director of the Aid Policy Division (2001-02), Minister at the Japanese Embassy in Jakarta (2002-2004), Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission in Moscow (2004-07), and Ambassador in Charge of United Nations Affairs in MOFA's Foreign Policy Bureau (2007-08). In that position he was responsible for Peacekeeping Operations and United Nations Security Council reform. He said he spent a good

part of his time trying to convince counterparts at the Ministry of Defense of the need to deploy Japanese forces in peacekeeping operations. Akimoto's English is decent. He said he spent two years at the University of Indiana learning to speak Russian, joking that it was quite hard for him to learn Russian in English. This course of study was followed by a year at the Russian State University in Moscow. Akimoto is pleasant and seems straight-forward. His official resume indicates he is married and has two daughters.

COMMENT

¶17. (C) The Japanese were very pleased to be able to consult on Africa at the Director General/Assistant Secretary level and, while eager to discuss ways in which we can cooperate on Africa, were mainly preoccupied with China's activities. While we agree that there is a genuine interest in helping to "do good" in Africa for humanitarian and commercial reasons, we believe the main motivating factors for Japan when it comes to Africa are (1) the desire to obtain support for Tokyo's bid to gain a permanent seat on the Security Council, and (2) a deep-rooted need to compete with China for influence on the international stage.

¶18. (U) This cable was cleared by A/S Frazer.

SCHIEFFER